

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A joint distraction device for facilitating joint arthroscopy comprising:

an articulating member having at least one handle portion; and

a bone contacting generally spheroidal member operable to be pulled through the joint with the one handle portion; and

a plurality of the bone contacting generally spheroidal members having a bone contacting surface coupled to said articulating member and operable to contact a bone forming the joint to selectively distract the joint.

2. (Original) The joint distraction device of claim 1 wherein said articulating member has proximal and distal ends, the joint distracting device further comprising:

a first spheroidal member having a first diameter disposed proximally on the articulating member to the other spheroids; and

a second spheroidal member disposed distally to said first spheroidal member having a second diameter which is larger than said first diameter.

3. (Original) The joint distraction device of claim 2 wherein said spheroidal members have a plurality of diameters.

4. (Original) The joint distraction device of claim 2 wherein said spheroidal members increase in diameter from said proximal end to said distal end.

5. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 1 wherein said spheroidal members have at least one flat surface.

6. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 5 wherein said spheroidal members have a pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a thickness.

7. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 5 wherein said articulating member has proximal and distal ends, the joint distracting device further comprising:

a first spheroidal member having a first pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a first thickness, disposed proximally on the articulating member to the other spheroids; and

a second spheroidal member having a second pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a second thickness disposed distally to said first spheroidal member, the second thickness being larger than said first thickness.

8. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 6 wherein said spheroidal members have a plurality of thicknesses.

9. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 8 wherein said spheroidal members have a circular cross-section and have thicknesses which increase from proximal to distal end.

10. (Currently Amended) A joint distraction device for facilitating separation of two articulating bone surfaces comprising:

a plurality of bone contacting spheroidal members each having a bone contacting surface;

an articulating coupling mechanism, operable to retain the bone contacting spheroidal members;

wherein the bone contacting spheroidal members are configured to separate the articulating bone surfaces at a first predetermined distance as the bone contacting surfaces engage the bone.

11. (Currently Amended) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein said articulating coupling mechanism has proximal and distal ends, the joint distracting device further comprising:

a first bone contacting spheroidal member having a first diameter disposed proximally on the articulating member to the other bone contacting spheroid members; and

a second bone contacting spheroidal member disposed distally to said first bone contacting spheroidal member having a second diameter which is larger than said first diameter.

12. (Original) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein said articulating coupling mechanism is a cord having a handle.

13. (Currently Amended) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein the coupling mechanism extends from a proximal end to a distal end and wherein said bone contacting spheroidal members increase in diameter from the proximal end to the distal end.

14. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein at least one spheroidal member has at least one flat surface.

15. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein at least one spheroidal member has a pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a thickness.

16. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 10 wherein said articulating coupling mechanism has proximal and distal ends, the joint distracting device further comprising:

a first spheroidal member having a first pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a first thickness, disposed proximally on the articulating coupling mechanism to the spheroids; and

a second spheroidal member having a second pair of generally parallel surfaces defining a second thickness disposed distally to said first spheroidal member, the second thickness being larger than said first thickness.

17. (Withdrawn) The joint distraction device of claim 15 wherein said spheroidal members have a plurality of thicknesses.

18. (Withdrawn) A method of separating two articulating surfaces of a joint comprising the steps of:

providing an articulating member having at least one handle portion; and
a plurality of generally spheroidal members disposed on said articulating member;

positioning at least one spheroidal member adjacent to the articulating surface; and

applying forces to the spheroidal member so as to cause the articulating surfaces to separate.

19. (Withdrawn) The method according to Claim 18 wherein providing a joint distraction device further includes providing a first spheroidal member having a first diameter disposed proximally on the articulating member to the other spheroid members, and a second spheroidal member disposed distally to said first spheroidal member having a second diameter which is larger than said first diameter.

20. (Withdrawn) The method according to Claim 19 wherein at least one spheroidal member comprises a cross-section selected from the group of a rectangle, a circle, and an ellipse, and combinations thereof.